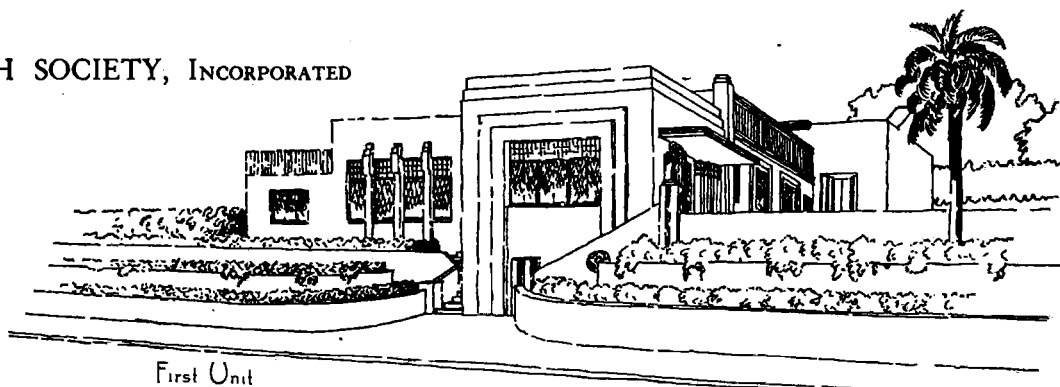


PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY, INCORPORATED

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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA



BIBLE COURSE SERIES

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FOURTH YEAR

# THE STUDENTS MONTHLY LETTER

New York, May, 1937.

## THE SECRET DOCTRINE IN THE BIBLE

Dear Friend:

*The Vedas, the sacred books of the ancient Aryan Hindus, appear to be the oldest of Scriptural writings and the source of most of the sacred books now venerated throughout the world. The religious traditions of the ancient Hindus are of incredible antiquity. The traditions of these people indicate that the laws and institutes of the gods were revealed to the progenitors of the Aryans in the highlands of the Himalaya mountain country nearly a million years ago. The migration of the Aryan tribes, first Southward and then Westward, resulted in the establishment of several sub-races and cultures. The migrating tribes carried with them the sacred traditions of their ancient gods. With the development of writing the records passed from the memories of priests and scribes to the more permanent and impersonal media of stone, clay and papyrus.*

*From the Vedas poured forth the streams of religious tradition which, flowing into various nations down through the ages, appear in the course of time as the single source of the numerous Scriptural writings of the world. Great saints and sages interpreting this ageless wisdom, wrote their commentaries or restated in the terms of their own day*

*the Vedic lore and the sacred tradition. In China Lao Tze and Confucius were the interpreters and their writings have become Scripture. In India Buddha was the great Emissary. In Persia it was Zoroaster. In Egypt, Akhnaton and Hermes. In Greece, Orpheus, Pythagoras and Plato. In Syria it was Moses and later Jesus.*

*Bibles, so-called, are collections of inspired writing and the recording of ancient oral traditions. They are accumulated over immense periods of time and can usually be traced to the lore of preceding civilizations. They are built up from earlier fragments and should never be regarded as revelations in the sense of being delivered IN TOTO to any individual by some divine being. The revelation factor is generally limited to interpretation. Some illumined individual, contemplating sacred matters, perceives some deeply concealed value and by placing special emphasis upon this new aspect comes to be regarded as a religious founder.*

*Among ancient peoples sacred writings were reserved for the contemplation of initiated priests and were not available to the laity. The priests interpreted such parts of the Scriptures as applied to the problems of the occasion. The populace, gathered*

before the temple, received their spiritual instruction from initiates of the priestly orders who stood upon the porch of the holy house and solemnly expounded the laws. These priests were equipped with the keys to the Scriptural allegories by which they were enabled to unlock the profounder parts of the spiritual tradition. After the decline of the Mysteries the sacred books fell into the hands of the profane with the result that the subtler values were lost.

According to the teachings of the old initiates, the spiritual tradition was likened to a flame burning forever upon the altars of the gods. The flame was divided into seven flames and these in turn were again divided into seven, the result being forty-nine fires or the forty-nine spiritual revelations, called in the Cabbala of Moses the forty-nine gates of the law. Thus out of the One Eternal Truth came forth the Seven World Religions, each in turn divided into seven lesser parts—altogether constituting the Divine Wisdom.

The Scriptures of the world are the written records devised to preserve and at the same time to conceal the secrets of the forty-nine branches of the Eternal Law. It naturally follows that there is a certain interdependence between religious writings. To understand any one sacred book completely it is necessary to also understand all other sacred books. In spite of human prejudice to the contrary, there is but one religion and one truth and all the great faiths of the world are parts or fragments of the Ancient Wisdom. It has been difficult for human beings to accept this truth and for lack of inter-religious understanding there has been very little religious understanding. Each man, clinging to his own book, hugging to his heart his own fragment of the law, has believed that there is a peculiar virtue in proclaiming a part and denying the rest.

The Christian Bible is the principal sacred book of the Western world. It is usually divided into two parts and occasionally into three parts by the insertion between the Old and New Testaments of the Apocrypha or "doubtful books." The Old Testament sets forth the secret doctrine in Israel. It is a Cabbalistic book, almost unintelligible with-

out the assistance of certain commentaries. The New Testament derives its teachings from the Essene mystics of Syria, the Mithraic cultists of Persia, the Serapic Rites of the Egyptians, the Simonean Gnosis also of Syria, and the Neo-Platonism of Alexandria. It follows that the unknown authors of the Gospels were men learned in the comparative religious systems of their day. It is impossible at this time to engage in speculation or controversy as to the identity of the Gospel writers. It is sufficient to say that they possessed a working knowledge of the Secret Doctrine and cunningly contrived to conceal this knowledge in what is made to appear as an historical narrative of the life and works of an individual.

We must concern ourselves with the Old Testament. Like the Christian revelation, the Mosaic tradition sets forth under the guise of history an elaborate metaphysical system derived directly from the older Egyptian lore and indirectly from Chaldea, Phoenicia and India. Moses was an initiate of the secret schools of Egypt, and the Pentateuch usually ascribed to Moses, is the surviving remnant of the most profound teaching. It is quite unlikely that the Pentateuch has descended to the present time in anything resembling its original form. In fact there is considerable evidence that the true books of Moses were lost in the night of time. But whatever be the case, it is certain that although somewhat distorted in form, the Ancient Wisdom still survives in the Old Testament writings and can be extracted therefrom with the aid of certain keys and patient, illumined research.

Our interpretation of the Biblical writings is based upon a system of cross reference in which all the great schools of ancient religion and philosophy are considered as one composite structure. Thus each system is interpreted in the light of the others. As each religion has been built up from innumerable older beliefs, the understanding of these various background beliefs is absolutely essential. The gaps in one system, where the tradition has been mutilated or lost, can be filled in from other systems of similar tradition. If the work is painstakingly done the result is a complete picture by which the student is able to comprehend the correct meaning

of obscure passages and fill in perplexing vacancies. The important thing is to be sure that the building-in is done from the same stream of tradition as the religion that is being reconstructed.

### BIBLICAL COSMOGONY

The cosmogony of the Jews is derived directly from the Chaldean and Egyptian. This has been proved beyond any question of doubt by the discovery of cuneiform tablets much older than the Jewish Bible which contain many of the stories set forth in the opening chapters of Genesis. It is quite possible that the Old Testament originally contained a much more amplified account of the creation, but certainly it is still possible to make much more of the Book of Genesis than the average churchman has accomplished. With the aid of the Jewish and Cabbalistic commentaries, Genesis is amplified into a rational account of the beginning of the universe—far more vital, significant and impressive than the accepted theological version. A great scholar observed in the last century, that Christian theology, and of course he included Jewish cosmogony, was the only system believed by the more advanced races of the earth to insist that God made the universe out of nothing.

**THE GODS.** The Book of Genesis opens with a simple and dramatic statement which has been Anglicized into the most impressive sentence in English literature:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

This verse apparently presents no problem, but the more a searching student thinks about it the more fully he will realize that into ten words has been compressed a cosmic process involving hundreds of millions of years of time and innumerable complicated mysteries. Only an elaborate commentary can make this verse even partly intelligible to the human mind entirely ignorant of divine and cosmic procedures.

We must first define the word GOD as it is used in this case and throughout the first chapter of the Bible. The word in Hebrew is not God or Jah or Jehovah, but ELOHIM. God is a reverent

but entirely insufficient word to convey the true meaning of Elohim. Most important to be considered are two facts. First, in Hebrew, Elohim is an androgynous term inferring a combination of male and female attributes. Second, the word, by its termination, is plural. Actually therefore the word ELOHIM means "the male-female creators," representing a host or at least a group of powers and not, under any condition, a single personal entity.

The words "heaven and earth" are also misleading, through inadequate translation. By heaven and earth should be understood a superior and inferior condition; a separation of qualities, not a division of place. The average reader will think of heaven as the firmament and earth as the planet, and this interpretation will destroy entirely the significance of the verse. It would be better to interpret heaven and earth as spirit and matter, or the subtle and the gross in the sense of vibration or qualities of life and vitality.

The words "In the beginning" also present difficulties. The wise student will interpret them as "from that which is first" or "in eternal principles" or "that which was in the beginning."

This leaves only the word "created" and here again misunderstanding is almost inevitable. The human mind always thinks of creation as the making of something that is new. If we think, however, we will realize that in creating any physical thing creation is only a new pattern made up of already existing factors. Thus if a man creates a picture he does so with the aid of paints and brushes and canvas, the true creation being the inward inspiration which applies these instruments for the release of an idea. Creation in this verse implies rather FORMATION, or MANIFESTATION, the arranging of ever-existing elements into new patterns to be the vehicles of purpose.

With these thoughts in mind, let us read again the verse according to a fuller understanding of its meaning:

From the eternal principles and essences the androgynous creator-gods manifested forth the positive and negative aspects of Being.

Having thus clarified our interpretation, we can bring to bear upon it such commentary matter from ancient Jewish beliefs as will reveal the full significance of the verse.

The Jewish mystics recognized an eternal, definitionless Principle which they denominated AIN SOPH, the Boundless. From the Egyptians they derived the teaching that this Boundless One possessed three intrinsic aspects or attributes—Being, Life and Light. These three as one, and that ONE formless, ageless and changeless, was the true GOD whose most perfect symbol was SPACE—the source and ultimate of all things.

Periodically, according to great cycles, SPACE caused to emerge from its own nature, Primordial Unity—the objectification of Being, Life and Light. This first manifestation was called the Opened Eye and was designated by the Cabbalists KETHER, the Crown of the Eternal Glory. AIN SOPH, the Absolute, was life in suspension. KETHER, the first-born of the Absolute, was life in expression. Within the nature of Kether was manifested polarity which is the foundation of activity. The polarities were called ABBA, the father, and AIMA the mother. Abba was the positive manifestation of spirit as force, energy and power. Aima was the negative manifestation of spirit as matter, substance and receptivity. From the union of Abba and Aima, that is energy and substance, was produced form.

According to the Cabbalists, the ELOHIM, or the creator-gods, were the progeny of the union of life and matter. It was the Elohim in turn, moving in Space, who brought forth the mundane universe over which they ruled. By mundane is meant not the physical worlds but the metaphysical system of which the physical creation is the lowest or seventh part. This first manifestation or agitation was equivalent to the conception of the universe in all its parts, or like the planting of a seed from which was to grow the worlds. It is the first motion in the Absolute.

The comparisons in other religious systems checks and justifies the speculations of the Jewish mystics. In the Northern Tibetan system the meditations of Adi Buddha, universal consciousness, produces the seven Dhyani Buddhas or the seven

modes of consciousness by which the world is formed. In the teachings of the Persians the Supreme Nature, Ahura-Mazda, manifested the Amesha-Spentas who become the Formators of the lower worlds. In the Egyptian Hermetic teachings the Elohim are the Governors, the Cosmocratores. In the ancient Egyptian system they were the Ammonian Artificers, the servants of Ptah who fashions the Egg of the Universe upon a potter's wheel. The ELOHIM are also the seven Cabiri of Samothrace; the seven rays upon the golden crown of the Gnostic Lion; the sacred seven, the unwritten vowels which together make up the name of the manifested divinity, the seven colors of the spectrum, the seven days of creation, the seven seals of Revelation. The eternally recurring septenary, by which art, music and physics are bound together, are the ELOHIM, the seven Breaths that move upon the Deep.

THE FORMATION OF THE WORLDS. The second verse of Genesis states:

*"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."*

Interpreted according to the mystical tradition, this would read:

*And the below, the passive aspect of Being, was formless and devoid of manifested life, and darkness or oblivion filled the whole expanse. The spirits of ELOHIM moved, impregnated and enlivened the essences of the negative Principle.*

In some of the Hindu works this motion of the Elohim is referred to as the "curdling of Space" into the worlds. The seven modes of intelligence, which are the personification of the seven laws of nature, which are in turn the seven wills of the spirit, began to manifest patterns. They were first in the nature of vortices, called in the SEPHER YETZIRAH the whirlwinds. One form of this theogonic myth declares that the universe was created by the Deity speaking the Sacred Word. Of

course the Word was made up of the seven vowels of the Elohim which together are the Fiat which issues as a host of living powers from the "lips of the Creator." In the North Asiatic tradition the seven Sons of the Eternal establish their foundation in the Deep. Seated in the six directions of space, six of the Builders turn upon the seventh who is placed in the center and is called the Immovable. In the Cabbala the center is called the Holy Temple, the Sabbath of eternal rest, around which moves the six days of creation.

In the Cabbala the higher powers do not descend into the lower elements to ensoul the mundane diffusion, but rather CAST THEIR SHADOWS upon the Deep or the lower elements. In the teachings of Lamaism we have a somewhat similar statement—the meditating Dhyani Buddhas dream themselves into the illusion of matter, causing a certain part of their own consciousness to assume the illusion of existence, though ever meditating above it. The shadows of the Elohim, descending into the depths of matter, result in the formation of four levels or planes of illusion which the old Jewish philosophers called "worlds." These planes correspond roughly to the levels of spirit, mind, soul and body in man. In each of the four worlds the seven Elohim are reflected, to become in all twenty-eight, which caused them to be associated in symbolism with the lunar month and its four weeks of seven days. The ancient Jewish priests had peculiar veneration for the Moons, their faith being a lunar cult.

Only the lowest of the four "worlds" was involved in the physical creation. This lower or fourth "world" was made up of seven parts or planes—the shadows of the seven Elohim. Of the seven planes which make up the mundane sphere, six are superphysical and one is physical, the lowest. The six superphysical are called CAUSAL and are the source of the energies and patterns which manifest or flow into and through the seventh.

The seventh and lowest diffusion of the fourth "world" is that with which the Creation story in Genesis is concerned. The unfoldment of this physical plane is according to the pattern commonly known as the Chaldean system of cosmogony.

In the cosmogony of the Greeks the material

universe is brought into being by seven gods, each of whom rules over one of the seven parts of the mundane diffusion. In the Greek system the gods are: Phanes, Ouranus, Chronos, Rhea, Zeus, Poseidon and Hades. The mundane world consists of seven interpenetrating spheres of which six are superphysical and the lowest or seventh is physical. According to this system, the seventh or physical plane is ruled over by Hades the subterranean god, to symbolize the physical plane as being the furthest removed from the divine energy.

**THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION.** The description given in Genesis I: verses 1 to 31, must be understood to represent the gradual development of the physical universe. The Elohim, the gods of the Dawn, mold the negative substances of being into the form and pattern of the solar system. Having brought the planets (including the luminaries) into objective existence, the Elohim then take up their thrones in the planetary bodies, and, according to the Chaldean genesis, circle about in their orbits age after age, governing with their celestial splendours the creatures of the lower world.

The pattern for the creation of our own solar system applies to all other solar systems in our universal chain. The pattern also applies to all forms of life evolving within solar systems, from suns and planets to grains of sand, electrons and atoms. This is the Cabbalistic teaching concerning the Macrocosm and the Microcosm, or the greater and the lesser creations, each patterned according to the other. This led the Cabbalists to say, comparing man, a microcosm, with the universe, a macrocosm, that "Man is a little universe and the universe is the Grand Man." This did not mean that the universe actually resembled man in his physical form but rather that the same system of geometry which patterned man also patterned the world, and that the same essences, principles and forces were in both. The Elohim say: "Let us make man in our own image" etc. That is, let the lesser creation be patterned after the greater creation, and be similar to it in principle.

Medieval theologians insisted that the seven creative periods called "Days" made up together a

week similar in time to a week of mortal calculation. This the wisest of the ancient philosophers always denied, insisting that the term "Day" in Genesis referred rather to an age, cycle, or great period of time. Science uses such terms as "period" or "age" to signify one of the major divisions in the evolution of the earth and the life evolving upon it. Thus such terms as the Miocene or Pliocene Age, or the Glacial Period. Modern science is of the opinion that the physical earth has existed for from 500 to 1000 million years. A recent discovery of fossil remains indicates animal life upon the earth at least 175 million years ago. When these figures are compared with the theological opinion that the earth was created by the arbitrary will of God in the 5th millenium B. C., it is apparent that science and theology come to a parting of the ways. The Biblical scholar, however, is not guilty of the delusions which afflict the pious but fanatical theologian who clings desperately to the jot and tittle of the "revised version." There is abundant confirming evidence to indicate that the Genesis given in the Bible describes processes occurring over a period of at least a billion years; and that it describes how the creative forces of nature brought forth sequentially the superphysical bodies of the solar system, then the material planets, and then shifting perspective to the planet earth, unfolded the life upon it up to the present state.

The descent of the Elohim with their hosts of spirits into the swirling mists of Primordial Substance and their molding of these mists into the sidereal patterns and bodies, constituted the INVOLUTIONARY process or the descent of spirit into matter. The unfolding of the worlds through the manifestation of ever-improving types of life, or the release of consciousness through a concatenation of improving vehicles, constitutes what Darwin called EVOLUTION. There is no real argument between science and religion. The difficulty is principally due to the extremely compressed description of the creative processes given in Genesis. If the reader can take such a statement as "And God created" and read instead: And the forces of nature, over a great period, caused to manifest—most of the difficulties will be overcome.

It should be distinctly realized that the ancients understood by their "gods" or creative hierarchies not personal beings performing sorcery in space but rather aspects of creative intelligence gradually unfolding through their own creations. In the Egyptian rites it is said the gods impregnated space with themselves, and then the seeds of the divine natures sprouted and grew up to form the universe. The proper attitude is to realize that divinity is evolving in and through the universal formation. Evolution is really eternal life ideating or shining through material organisms, as a light might shine through a lamp. Evolution is also therefore inward life building ever more perfect forms through which to express its own potentialities.

The Book of Genesis, Chapter I, verses 24 to 26, inclusive, reveal that the ancients were fully aware of man's relationship to the animal world. In the sixth day both the animal and the human kingdom is formed, the animal manifesting first and finally man, created in the image or likeness of the Elohim.

The first part of verse 26 requires special emphasis: "And God said let US make man in OUR image, after our likeness." Then in the last part of the 27th verse it says: "male and female created he them." This is a very confused picture according to the King James version. That the word God is intended to be plural is evident in the statement "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Here, of course, God should be read Elohim, the creators. By the word "said" in each case is to be inferred not to speak but to will or to inwardly determine, the same thought that is implied in the Tibetan creation when the worlds are formed by the meditation or the inward mental determination of the Dhyanas. In the Gnostic writings it is described that the Builders each gave to man a certain part of their own nature so that when he was finally completed he participated in all of the universal powers and in addition possessed the life of the eternal Father, Ain Soph, the Boundless.

THE PRE-ADAMIC MAN. The condensation of the earth from its nebulous fire-mist state required many millions of years. In those ages there

was no time with which to measure the infinite processes, as time is man-made. At last the body of our planet was formed and the surface of the earth was in a molten state, and vapors surrounded the whole planet. The earth was not habitable by any such creatures as man has recollection of, although it is taught in the old records that fantastic beings did float in the flames. The physical globe floated in a sea of superphysical humidity, termed by the Greeks "aether." This is the origin of the primitive belief that the continents of the earth floated in a great sea. This aether was not the physical humid vapors arising from the earth's surface, but vital ethereal element in which were evolving the forms that were later to descend upon the earth as species and races of living things.

Most of the ancient philosophies teach that life descended onto the physical planet from some sphere of superphysical energy which encloses the physical planet. Curiously enough this old opinion survives, and recent stratosphere explorations have discovered living spores in the stratosphere. A number of scientists have come to the conclusion that space may contain these spores which, like drops of condensing water, represent seed-lives oozed out of the etheric body of the earth. It is too soon to say what will be the final opinions of scientists upon this matter, but it is also entirely too soon to declare the ancient philosophers to be wrong.

Boehme, the German mystic, describes the Celestial Adam who dwelt not upon the earth but in the heavens, a term which may infer this etheric diffusion. Certainly the ancients believed that even the process of incarnation infers the descent of the superphysical principles of man from a humid sphere outside of the earth. This humidity is described by the old mythologists as a river which divides the earth from the outer universe. To the pagans this river was the Styx, and to the Christians it is the Jordan with its hosts of the Redeemed gathered upon the distant shore. The Greek poets wrote of the herds of souls floating in the mist which divides the world of the living from the world of the dead. By the world of the living is simply meant the physical plane, and by the world of the dead the

superphysical, subjective universe, although in fact the opposite would be more nearly true.

In the Biblical story, man dwelt in a Paradisiacal sphere before his fall into the mystery of generation. This Paradisiacal sphere is called a garden and has been variously located by religious enthusiasts upon almost every part of the earth's surface. The fact, however, is that Eden is not on the earth's surface but above it, or, more correctly, in the higher etheric element which encloses the earth in a globe of translucent energy. The four rivers are the four streams of ether or energy which sustain the four kingdoms of the physical world—mineral, vegetable, animal and human. Man physically is nourished by the vital ethers of nature. These ethers now work through him but in pre-Adamic times he possessed no physical body and these ethers formed an etheric body.

In the midst of Eden was a small area which was termed Paradise. The ancients believed this to represent approximately the North Polar area of the etheric globe which, like the physical globe, possessed polarity. The study of cell life shows that impregnated cells develop first from their North polar caps, and the same is true of planets and all of the cosmic planes. The first connection between the etheric plane and the physical was polar. Therefore physical life, moving downward from the etheric state, flowed particularly to the poles which were the first parts of the physical earth's surface to crystallize.

It is therefore stated that in ancient times, millions of years ago, the gods brought the seeds or germs of life first to the earth's polar cap. The descent of the gods is described in Genesis VI, 2, where the Sons of God saw the daughters of men and took unto themselves wives. By this we are to understand that the cooling of the earth's surface resulted in the liberation of elements. These elements, moved by the will of the gods, gradually assumed forms and patterns, even as the impregnated cell gradually builds an organism capable of sustaining individual intelligent existence.

In the very ancient times the first bodies were such as air and water, for these responded most easily to the impulses of the creating will. When

*the vehicles or bodies built up first from the more subtle parts of the physical globe reached a certain degree of development, the spirits dwelling in the ether above and called in the Bible the "Sons of God," flowed downward and into the new bodies which are called the "daughters of men," or more correctly the daughters of Manas or mind—the mind—formed bodies—for the word man literally means mind.*

*While dwelling in the Paradisiacal state the entities which we now know as men were androgynous, as is explicitly stated—"they were created male and female." In the old Cabbala they are described as having been formed back to back, a male and female organism. But more correctly is to be inferred that they possessed inwardly the potentialities of both positive and negative powers.*

*The Edenic Garden contained not only the rudiments of human existence but also the other kingdoms which were to manifest. It was therefore a sort of superior earth in which forms of life developed and prepared themselves for physical incarnation, even as the wise in this world are building superphysical bodies in which to function when the race has finished its physical evolution.*

*The name given to the order of life which was to incarnate as human was ADAM which means species, type or kind. Never for a moment does it infer a single individual. Adam, therefore, correctly means a mode of consciousness, a type with mind, as distinguished from the animal and vegetable kingdoms which do not possess individualized intelligence, and therefore are properly termed species. These lower kingdoms have a center of consciousness called a monad, whereas man has*

*evolved his monad into an ego or a center of "I am-ness."*

*The process of man's entry into physical existence, or the birth of the terrestrial Adam, was preceded by an elaborate evolutionary program. Forms were built up in the material world by a process of natural experimentation. These forms were not habitable by creatures possessing mind and they passed away in the laboratory of evolution. It was only after hundreds of millions of years of growth and development that forms were generated suitable to the manifestation of the celestial Adam.*

*The forms which were not used, called the mind-less, the shadows, and the monsters, are described by Berosus in his CHALDEAN HISTORY as composite beings made up of animals, birds and fishes with many heads. They are also referred to in the Cabbala as the Kings of Edom, the unbalanced giants who perished in the Void. In chapter VI, 4th verse of Genesis it says: "There were giants in the earth in those days."*

*At last by the workings of nature from below upwardly, forms were organized through which the human life wave could come into manifestation. When this process had been consummated, man's consciousness descended into a specially prepared part of what appeared to be the animal kingdom, whereupon this kingdom branched off definitely from the true animal kingdom, resulting in the scientific perplexity concerning the missing link and the origin of human individuality.*

*Such are a few of the reasonable conclusions, sustained by the ancient commentaries and cosmological systems, to be derived from the early chapters of Genesis.*

*Yours very sincerely,*

MANLY P. HALL